

Renegotiate Indus treaty with Pak: Parl panel to govt

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In a significant recommendation, a parliamentary panel on Thursday urged the government to re-negotiate the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan, noting that pressing issues such as climate change, global warming and environmental impact assessment are missing from the pact that divides the Indus waters.

The standing committee on water resources said, the treaty was framed on the basis of knowledge and technology existing in 1960 when the perspective of both nations was merely confined to river management and usage of water through construction of dams, barrages, canals and hydro-power generation.

Any suggestion of "renegotiating" the IWT is seen in political light and is unlikely to be welcomed in Pakistan. Though, India has not moved to alter it, PM Narendra Modi had okayed proposals to further develop use of India's share following border tensions with Pakistan early in his first tenure as PM.

The panel recommended that the government examine the feasibility of making maximum use of the provisions of the treaty in terms of "full utilization of all accessible water of the eastern rivers and maximum utilization of the irrigation and hydropower potential of western rivers, including permissible water storage".

"There is a need to renegotiate the treaty to establish an institutional structure or legislative framework to address the impact of climate change on water availability and other challenges", said panel, headed by BJP Lok Sabha member Sanjay Jaiswal.

The committee submitted its report on flood management in the country through multiple measures including international water treaties and agreements with Pakistan, China and Bhutan.
